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A Carnival of Sports



Verend Minster

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A Carnival of Sports

AN ENTERTAINMENT

REPRESENTING SUCH POPULAR SPORTS AS

Tennis, Archery,

Base-Ball, Boxing,

Foot-Ball, etc.

By

VEREND MINSTER

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A CARNIVAL OF SPORTS

BY VEREND MINSTER

King Carnival, seated on his decorated throne, in colors suitable for a gala-day, at the right of the stage, and holding a silver trumpet and wand, calls for his subjects, who represent the various popular sports in turn. They advance to the sound of music, as summoned, bearing the implements of their respective games, first bowing low in obeisance to their monarch, and then advancing to the front of the stage and taking suitable positions for speaking. After delivering their messages they retire in a similar manner, after making homage to their king.

King Carnival.—

[N palmy days of old, when Greece and Rome held
sway,

Athletic, manly sports engaged man's time and thought.
The great Olympic games, the coliseum at Rome,
Grand trials of speed and strength were what men
talked about.

Men feared not to shed blood ; men flinched not when
attacked ;

For pride in self-control and strength of frame ran
high.

A gentler age holds sway, and men refrain from scenes
Of cruelty and rage. But still men throng to see
A race of trotting stock, a soldiers' grand parade,
A day of sports where men engage in trials of skill.
Such, here, is our attempt. We do not advertise
A show professional. We only bring to you
A few familiar sports as we can show them here.
The game of tennis first we beg to introduce.

TENNIS.

[*Enter four with tennis costume, balls, and racket.*]

Spokesman.—

In playing games, so many ways the world has found
employment

That none are sought for in these days that don't afford
enjoyment.

Indeed, some games there are in vogue that life and
comfort menace ;

But naught like this can e'er be charged on innocent
lawn-tennis.

Some men who guard their daughters well and closely
watch their sporting,

Appear to have a secret fear of anything like *courting*.
But when they find that neither law nor love controls
this sport,

They let them have a *racket* light and enter tennis court.
And mothers fond, whose sons, turned loose, are apt to
make them nervous,

Have no complaint if they acquaint themselves with
this neat *service*.

A miser, e'en, whose care for all is scrupulously nice,
Cannot restrain his scheming brain from this glad enter-
prise.

He hears it talked of, calls his son, and bids him straight-
way learn

The rules and regulations here for *making a return*.

And maidens shy, who would not try to make a single
rap

If at the end they thought 'twould send their feet into a
trap,

(For should a man propose a ban 'twould set them in a rage)

Behold the *net*, and never fret, but in the sport engage.
The game is safe, it will not chafe a player's nerves
though weak,

And one who tires finds exercise of which all highly
speak.

All four, forcibly.—

Yes, tennis is the game for me,
And tennis suits us all,
For what will lend us fresher glee
Than racket, net, and ball?

[*Exeunt.*]

ARCHERY.

King.—

There is a sport called Archery,
Of course, you all must know
'Tis popular with ladies, too,
Each belle must have a *bow*.
And while in shooting Cupid's darts
They get things strangely mixed,
There's many a youth whom bright eyes pierce
And leave his soul transfixed.

[*Enter young lady archer with bow and arrows. Speaks :*]

But when a lady tries to shoot
The arrow made of wood

She draws her bow

At arm's length so,

[*Illustrating by a side presentation.*]

And finds that it is good.

At first she shakes, such pains she takes,

But when she's learned the game
 The arrow sings, the target rings,
 So certain is her aim.

The game is sure to fascinate,
 For, gayly as a lark,
 The bow is bent, and she has sent
 The arrow to its mark.

Enter small boy. Speaks :

The small boys have to try this sport—
 (The way the Indians shot),
 And grown-up boys the arrow poise,
 For they forget it not.

[*Exeunt.*]

BASE-BALL.

King Carnival (rising).—

Our national game
 I rise to proclaim.

[*Enter two, representing base-ball pitcher in uniform, and catcher with gloves, mask, and shield.*]

K. C. (continuing).—

From musty old histories, laid up in drawers,
 We read of artillery used in the wars.
 But none of that kind appears here on the slate,
 For that sort of nonsense is quite out of date.

Catcher.—

Cause why? cause without any censure or flattery
 Base-ball has developed a much improved *battery*.
 The batter, you know, is the man at the bat,
 The catcher he wears a wire cage for a hat,
 And a breast-plate of leather to ward off foul tips.
 (He needs a cold stove-lid to cover his lips!)

The pitcher and catcher have turns at the bat,
But they do their best work when *out*, for all that.

Pitcher.—

The man with the mask on receives the hard knocks,
But the brain-work is done by the man *in the box*.
He studies the batsman and marks where he swerves,
And then he delivers his most puzzling curves.
He bulldozes runners by feinting to throw,
And heads off the reckless who venture to *go*.
He scoops in the *hot ones*, embraces the *pops*,
And even the *grounder* he frequently stops.
He gets them to *second*, and swift as a bird
He heads off a runner just coming from *third*.
He often retires them in “one, two, and three,”
And steps to the bat with remarkable glee.
The papers next day sound his praises aloud
And say he *played ball* more than all of his crowd.
While as for the slugger who lent him support
They say that his movements afforded much sport.
They tell that with credit the ash he did wield
And pasted the *leather* all over the field.
Indeed, ere the playing had hardly begun
He sent a *sky-scraper* and bagged a *home run*.
They criticise sharply, and tell of *passed balls*
(Turned loose by the umpire’s irregular calls).
But talk as you choose to, the truth you can’t shirk,
The *battery* did all the liveliest work.

[*Exeunt.*]

TABLE GAMES.

[*At this point King Carnival from his throne at one end of platform points to two couples seated opposite, playing respectively tiddle-de-winks and chess, saying:*]

Our spooniest lovers, as every one thinks,
 Are over there playing at tiddle-de-winks,
 While as for the others, indeed, you would guess
 By their scowls and their silence they're playing at
 chess.

*[Enter two feather-weights wearing boxing-gloves and
 ready for practice.]*

BOXING.

K. C. continues.—

The human frame has wondrous traits,
 The mind has wondrous notions,
 The muscles and the sinews aid
 In making wondrous motions.
 Just take two lads of even build
 And let them go to sparring,
 There's not a nerve in either frame
 But that secures a jarring.
 When two engage in clashing arms,
 Or even smashing faces,
 The looker-on perceives the game
 A deal of sport embraces.

*[The two square off and one of them addresses the other,
 suiting the action here and there to the word.]*

Come on, you're challenged to engage,
 And I have never met two
 Who couldn't fill a fair-sized stage
 In one good lively set-to.
 Come up! don't stand there leaning back,
 For fear you'll get your head hit,
 I never made a strong attack,
 Excepting when I led it.

Take this—and that—with compliments—

And here's another coming,

You'll have to make a sharp defense

To keep this business humming.

[*The contestants rain blows one upon the other for a few moments and then retire.*]

FOOT-BALL.

[*The foot-ball representatives, a boy and a girl, enter un-announced and take positions well to the front of stage in position for conversation, in which the girl leads.*]

Girl.—

When fellows want a lively time,

A scuffle free for all,

They like to rush around and kick

Each other like a ball.

Of course there has to be a *ball*,

And *foot-ball* is the game,

But then it means to one and all

A scuffle just the same.

The fellows never quite intend

To break each other's bones,

But then the game is sure to end

With bruises, limps, and groans.

Lad.—

Well, where's the fun if boys can't *rush*

And try their strength of limb?

I hate to hear such silly gush,

'Tis too much like a hymn.

These girls can't understand a game

Unless 'tis hide-and-seek

Or playing dolls, or pussy-cat,
Or something quite as meek.
For lively from a good hard run,
With kickers tearing round,
Will make one feel his strength of heel
Before the goal is found.
For twenty lads or more to kick
Together at a ball
May quite confuse or somewhat bruise
Each other now—that's all.
[*Exeunt.*]

CROQUET.

[*Enter troupe of four or six girls.*]

First Girl.—

The men claim authority over the courts,
And boys will monopolize most of the sports.
They do the prize-rowing, they manage base-ball,
They handle the cricket, and try to run all.
But while many times they secure their own way,
They have to stand back when it comes to croquet.
Sometimes we allow them a mallet and ball,
And rarely a champion over us all.
But out on the lawn we can claim equal right
And settle our merit according to might.
From start until finish, with players well matched,
The game has a charm that is closely attached.
So long as one ball is kept back from the end
Uncertainty will its encouragement lend,
To those who, though seeming behind in the race,
Keep hoping at last to secure the first place.

Second Girl.—

'Tis fun when a player has rather loose nerves,
To say, "You can't hit," and mark where his ball swerves.
Or when one, with quite over-confident air
In playing makes blunders, the way he will stare
As others creep past him, is apt to amuse
If he is the victim of some clever ruse.
'Tis sport for just two in the game to enlist,
You've tried it. Ah! no? Then enjoyment you've missed.
Quick played, quick decided, unless some gross flaw
In the lawn should delay, and the time longer draw.
But *sides*, playing sides, is what most we enjoy
When each side consists of a girl and a boy.
To hinder each other—the two sides, you know,
Is what we attempt, and our progress is slow
Till one becomes rover, and gets in the way
Of his partner, who on him continues to play
And quick to its close brings the standing suspense
(A game where the novice "can't see any sense").

Third Girl.—

Sometimes a sharp player his chief object makes
To play on opponents and get to the stakes,
While even his partner may linger behind
Till he has attained the desire of his mind.
He hopes to play rover and thus turn about,
But sometimes opponents will just *put him out*,
Combine against his partner and thus win the game,
For which he is brought to retributive shame.

Fourth Girl.—

Sometimes there's a *booby*—can't pass the first wire,
And when he returns for a "steadier fire,"

Another, in mischief, will knock him about
Until from position he's constantly out.
It takes a long time for some players to learn
The folly of playing when out of their turn.
The rest get ahead, and, though loud he may scoff,
One gets on a *whitewash* he cannot rub off.

All in concert.—

You may hammer and hammer to make us learn books,
But here we do hammering "on our own hooks."
There are numerous games we enjoy much to play,
But for out-of-door practice, oh! give us croquet.

[*Exeunt all but King Carnival, who rises and calls :*]
Come, gather ye, good players all,
Once more before my throne,
King Carnival delights to see
True subjects of his own.

[*All troop in to music, bow low three times before the throne, then retire backward from the stage, re-enter, and curtain falls as they bow in homage. In each of the exercises it is desirable that suitable costumes be worn, and each representative of the several sports should be equipped with the proper implement. A gymnastic drill at the close by four tennis, two base-ball, and four croquet players with racquets, bats, and mallets can be arranged.*]

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